

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1 and 16. Please amend Claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 17, 19 and 20. Please add new Claims 21-24. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the desired vacuum is maintained in the range from about -0.05 psi to about -0.3 psi.
3. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the vacuum table is coupled to a motor which generates a vacuum.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the motor is coupled to a CPU which instructs the motor as to the amount of vacuum to generate.
5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the vacuum table is coupled to a vacuum sensor which detects the vacuum provided by the vacuum table.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the vacuum sensor and the motor are coupled to a CPU which receives vacuum information from the sensor and sends instructions to the motor.
7. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the transport belt is made from woven polyester.
8. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the transport belt is made from a reinforced polyurethane material.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the transport belt has a thickness of about 0.09 inch.
10. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the holes of the transport belt are spaced apart by about 1 inch.
11. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the holes of the transport belt have a diameter of about 0.1 inch.
12. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the transport belt is made from stainless steel.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the thickness of the transport belt is about 0.008 inch.
14. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~1~~ 21, wherein the porous sheet is made of sintered, porous polyethylene.
15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the porous sheet has a thickness of about 0.5 inch.
16. (Cancelled)
17. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~16~~ 23, wherein the desired level of vacuum is maintained from about -0.05 psi to about -0.3 psi.
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~16~~ 23, wherein the porous sheet acts as a flow restrictor.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~16~~ 23, wherein the porous sheet distributes the vacuum over a region of the transport belt.
21. (New) An apparatus for transporting a substrate through a printing system, comprising:
 - a vacuum table having a substantially flat top surface for supporting a substrate, the top surface of the vacuum table having a plurality of holes extending through the top surface and in fluid communication with a vacuum source located within the vacuum table;
 - a thin, substantially flat porous sheet over the top surface of the vacuum table; and
 - a moveable transport belt for moving a substrate over the top surface of the vacuum table, the transport belt being disposed over the porous sheet and having a plurality of holes extending through a thickness of the belt; the vacuum generated by the vacuum table creating a suction on a substrate placed on the transport belt, the porous sheet restricting fluid flow between the table and the transport belt.
22. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21, further comprising an indicator that detects the thickness of the substrate as the substrate moves through the printing system.
23. (New) A method for transporting a substrate in a printing system, comprising:
 - generating a vacuum with a vacuum table, the vacuum table having a substantially flat top surface for supporting a substrate, the top surface of the vacuum table having a plurality of holes extending through the top surface and in fluid communication with a vacuum source located within the vacuum table, a thin, substantially flat porous sheet being positioned over the top surface of the vacuum table;
 - using a transport belt, transporting the substrate over the top surface of the vacuum table, the transport belt being disposed over the porous sheet and having a plurality of holes extending through a thickness of the belt so that the vacuum generated by the vacuum table creates a suction on the substrate transported by the transport belt and the porous sheet restricts fluid flow between the table and the transport belt; and

maintaining the vacuum at a desired level as the area of the transport belt covered by the substrate varies as the substrate is transported through the printing system.

24. (New) The method of Claim 23, further comprising detecting the thickness of the substrate as the substrate moves through the printing system.